



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

*It's time to **Play Ball!***

This is our favorite time year! Cactus League Spring Training games officially begin this week offering residents and visitors 15 Major League Baseball clubs to enjoy. These games are such an incredible tourism asset for us and have an economic benefit that resonates throughout the entire state of Arizona! Because of these games our industry is uniquely positioned to remind these sports enthusiasts of all the wonderful attractions that can be found throughout the Grand Canyon State and create even more *fans* of Arizona.

Spring training games will be held from March 3 through April 2 at one of 11 stadiums in nine cities throughout the Phoenix Valley and in Tucson.

For more information about Cactus League Spring Training, visit www.cactusleague.com.

See you in the stands!

AOT News

New Updates to AOT's Research Web site!

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- [Globe-Miami Tourism Study](#)
- [Gross Sales and Taxes December 2009](#)
- [Passenger Volume December 2009](#)
- [State Park Visitation January 2010](#)
- [State Park Visitation December 2009](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Melissa Elkins, Research Manager, at 602-364-3716 or via e-mail at melkins@azot.gov.

Arizona Office of Tourism Announces ATU Social Media Workshops!

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present the next series of highly-informative Arizona Tourism University workshops. This complimentary workshop series, titled **First Why, Then How: Creating a Social Media Strategic Roadmap**, will begin in March.

The series will be presented by Jay Baer, one of the world's most popular social media consultants and bloggers. He is the creator of the *7-step Social Media Strategic Planning Process* and the *Twitter 20* series of live Twitter interviews. An online marketing pioneer, he has worked with more than 700 companies - and 25 of the Fortune 1000 - since 1994.

Be sure to sign up today by sending your RSVP to ATURSVP@azot.gov.

First Why, Then How: Creating a Social Media Strategic Roadmap complimentary workshops will be held from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. in the following locations: learnt

March 10

[City of Flagstaff Aquaplex](#)

1702 N. Fourth St.
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

March 26

[Glendale Civic Center](#)

5750 West Glenn Drive
Glendale, AZ 85301

April 9

Webinar – presentation delivered right to your desktop!

To register, send your contact information to ATURSVP@azot.gov.

AOT Now Accepting Nominations for Governor's Tourism Awards!

The Arizona Office of Tourism and our partners are busy coordinating plans for the next annual Governor's Conference on Tourism, July 12-14, at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson. The conference is the premier event for members of the travel industry to participate in dynamic work sessions and listen to informative guest speakers.

In addition to the conference, AOT coordinates the **Governor's Tourism Awards**, honoring individuals and organizations that have contributed noteworthy achievements over the past year to the betterment of the tourism industry. These award recipients are fine examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that have helped make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

AOT invites you to review the 2010 award categories and guidelines and submit nominations of individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to the tourism industry. The winners will be awarded at the Governor's Tourism Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, July 13.

All submissions must be received by **April 16, 2010**. Please visit the [Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) section of www.azot.gov for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms.

Look for future editions of **AOT in Action** for Governor's Conference on Tourism registration information!

AOT Events

Arizona Represented at Go West Summit

AOT attended the Go West Summit in Sacramento, California from February 1 – 4. Go West is an annual seminar and marketplace for tour operators and Western States regional tourism suppliers. There were approximately 100 operators from Europe, Latin America and Asia in attendance, in addition to many U.S. based receptive operators. The three-day event comprised of seminars and guest speakers, along with two days of pre-scheduled 12 minute appointments with the tour operators to review both their current and potential Arizona product. For more information or a copy of the report, please contact Hylton Fothergill at 602 364 3706 or via e-mail at hfothergill@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

[UK Trade Incentive Co-op Marketing Program](#)

Date: March – April

Location: UK

[UK Media and Trade Mission](#)

Dates: March 8 – 12

Location: London and Manchester

[Arizona Road Show in Mexico](#)

Date: March 15 – 19

Location: Mexico City and Guadalajara, Mexico

Industry News

SAVE the DATE: 2010 Forks & Corks –Thursday, April 8

Stars of the Valley's culinary scene join forces once again for a high-energy celebration of food and wine at the 7th annual Forks & Corks. More than 20 of the top chefs from renowned restaurants and resorts will be on hand to prepare specialties from their respective menus. Guests will indulge in savory samplings while enjoying the jazz styling of local favorite, Doc Jones & Nayo. Tastings from boutique wineries and microbreweries will also be available, as well as a silent auction featuring opportunities to purchase Arizona getaways and gift certificates. This is

a 21-and-over event. Forks & Corks will be held Thursday, April 8, 2010, from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. and the Camelback Esplanade.

The event is presented by Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association (AzHLA) and the Arizona Restaurant Association (ARA) to promote the cuisine from Arizona's fine assortment of restaurants and resorts as well as salute the pairing expertise of vineyards from around the world. The event is also designed to benefit the educational efforts of the Arizona Hotel and Restaurant Education Foundations. For more tickets visit www.ForksandCorks.org or call 602-604-0729.

Follow Forks & Corks on Twitter at: www.Twitter.com/ForksandCorks and become a fan on Facebook!

"Lost Decade" Cost \$500 Billion, Trade Group Says

The decline in overseas travel to the U.S. since 2000 has cost America 440,000 jobs and more than \$500 billion in total travel-related spending, a new report by the U.S. Travel Association, in conjunction with Oxford Economics, reveals. The new report, focused on the "Lost Decade" in overseas travel to the U.S., underscores U.S. Travel's recommendation that Congress pass bipartisan legislation-now awaiting action in the Senate-to create the first-ever promotion and communications program aimed at attracting international travelers to the U.S.

According to an analysis of international travel figures, the failure of the U.S. to simply keep pace with the growth in international long-haul travel worldwide has cost the economy 68.3 million lost visitors and \$509 billion in lost spending. U.S. Travel issued an urgent call to its members to urge Senators to support the Travel Promotion Act, which is expected to come up for a vote soon. (*www.Review-Journal.com/Business*; *www.TravelAgentCentral.com*, 9/22; *Special to TA*; *Travel Advance*, Feb. 23)

Consumer Confidence Takes a Swan Dive

Americans' confidence in the economy has suffered a sudden relapse, dimming hopes that they will start spending-and spurring job growth-any time soon. The consumer confidence index figures released Tuesday were much worse than analysts had expected and showed that Americans are morose about the job market and their economic prospects. The index fell almost 11 points to 46 in February, down from a revised 56.5 in January and the lowest level since a 40.8 reading in April 2009. It erased three consecutive months of improvement, according to the Conference Board, which releases the index. Economists were expecting a slight decrease to 55. The index is based on a sample of 5,000 U.S. households. (*AP*; *www.latimes.com/Business*; *www.Boston.com/Business*; *Pages 2B, USA Today*; *B3, New York Times*; *C1, Wall Street Journal*; *Travel Advance*, Feb. 24)

Survey Shows Slow Recovery in Biz Travel

More than half (56%) of U.S. adults plan to take a vacation sometime in the next six months, but this is seven points down from the percentage that expressed the same intention a year ago, according to the TravelHorizons survey co-authored by Ypartnership and the U.S. Travel Association. Business travel continues its slow recovery with more than one in seven adults (15%) planning at least one business trip during the next seven months, up from 13% recorded one year earlier. Both projections come from TravelHorizons quarterly survey of a nationally

representative sample of 2,251 U.S. households conducted Feb. 4-12. The U.S. Travel Association projects a slight increase in both business and leisure travel for 2010 over 2009. (www.TravelPulse.com; *Travel Advance*, Feb. 24)

Japanese Visitation Down in 3rd Quarter

Japan bookings to the U.S. decreased 10% to 15% on average in the third quarter, according to the Department of Commerce-sponsored Japan Travel Trade Barometer. None of the Japan trade reported an increase. The majority, 78% of the Japan travel trade, projected bookings to the U.S. to decrease in the fourth quarter of 2009 compared to the fourth quarter of 2008. And first quarter 2010 bookings are projected to be lower. However, a slight majority (52%) of the Japan firms that promote and sell Japan travel projected a decrease in bookings to the U.S. for the first quarter of 2010 compared to last year. Third-quarter 2009 arrivals from Japan totaled 849,687, down 5% compared to third-quarter 2008. (*Special to TA; Travel Advance*, Feb. 24)

National Park Visits up but Miss Record

Ten million more people visited national parks last year than in 2008, but the numbers fell short of the record for park visitation from 1987. More than 285 million people visited national parks and other units of the National Park Service in 2009, up from nearly 275 million in 2008, according to statistics released Tuesday. The record for visitation to national parks was set in 1987 at 287.2 million. Still, the 3.9% increase in 2009 visitation compared with 2008 was a triumph for the park system in a year when many sectors of the travel industry suffered a downturn because of the weak economy.

Factors that may have contributed to the increase in numbers in 2009, says the park service, include three weekends when park entrance fees were waived; visits by President Obama and his family to Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon; publicity from Ken Burns's televised series about the national parks; lower gas prices; and the strong value of the euro against the dollar, which encourages European tourism to the U.S. (*AP; www.Boston.com; Special to TA; Travel Advance*, Feb. 26)

Tourism Promotion Bill Passes Senate

After a long climb in Congress, the Senate passed the Travel Promotion Act 78 to 18 late Thursday and the bill will now be sent to President Obama for signature. The legislation establishes a multi-million dollar, public-private partnership to promote the United States as a travel destination and better explain travel security policies to foreign travelers. Passage of what is being called landmark legislation was hailed Thursday night by the travel industry. "This is a historic victory for the U.S. economy and the one in eight American workers whose jobs depend on travel," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association, which spearheaded the long drive to gain passage of the measure. "The United States Congress has sent a clear message that travel is a high priority to our nation and that tangible steps must be taken to increase travel to and within the United States," added Dow.

According to the U.S. Travel Association, an independent analysis by Oxford Economics found that the legislation could help attract 1.6 million additional visitors from other countries and create more than \$4 billion in consumer spending annually. The legislation, which passed the House in November, is expected to be signed into law by President Obama in the next few days. The Travel Promotion Act creates the Corporation for Travel Promotion, which will work closely

with the Departments of Commerce, Homeland Security and State to develop a nationally coordinated, multi-channel marketing and communications program to attract more international visitors and explain changing travel security policies.

"With the best minds coming together from government and private industry to boost international travel to our country, we can make travel an even stronger economic engine for America," said Caroline Beteta, chair of the U.S. Travel Association and president and CEO of the California Travel & Tourism Commission. The U.S. Travel Association has planned a news conference for later today to explain the legislation and outline the next steps for the travel industry. (www.TravelPulse.com; Special to TA; Travel Advance, Feb. 26)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

Connect with the Arizona Office of Tourism!

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